

FREE

# Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk January 15, 2017

North & West edition No 747

## TRANSPORT

### City support for traffic free day

But traders fear impact of bid to ease mounting pollution

## INDUSTRY

### MP calls on leisure vision for port

Council told to consider its future following latest setback

## HOMELESS

### Warning: More will die on our streets

Charity calls for changes to rough sleeper rules

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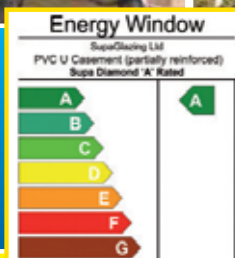
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# Kent on Sunday

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## Liberal and conservative views are both essential

THERE is a tendency in this day of Brexit and Donald Trump to assume anything 'liberal' is something to be scorned, derided and ignored.

That amid the backlash against the so-called political elite, we have decided anyone who dares ponder options and listens to alternative points of view – as per the definition of liberal – is part of the problem and thus no longer relevant.

It has then been extended to any party with a traditional political 'liberal slant' – a broad brush approach designed to silence those for whom politics are more than just a knee jerk reaction but actually align to their very way of life.

Whatever your political persuasion – and I make no judgement here – it's a dangerous position to adopt.

Because if there is one thing we now must accept in western democracies, it is the ability to bellow and say whatever is

necessary to sway opinion (regardless of its basis in fact) which sways elections. A worrying trend in so many respects as it pulls the rug from rational, reasoned debate and instead pulls simply at our fears or anxieties, rather than hopes and dreams. Shout the loudest and you will win appears to be the new mantra of election agents.

The truth is a 'liberal' approach to life is one which underscores the very way our society is run and our British values of fairness, tolerance and understanding. For the most part,

that is actually demonstrated by politicians of all hues, regardless of their reputations.

The truth is that the balance of liberal and conservative views is actually what creates a safe, balanced, inspiring society. Ignore either and trouble lurks.

Politics is endlessly fascinating, but to simply ignore a view is to stifle true democracy.



Editor **Chris Britcher**

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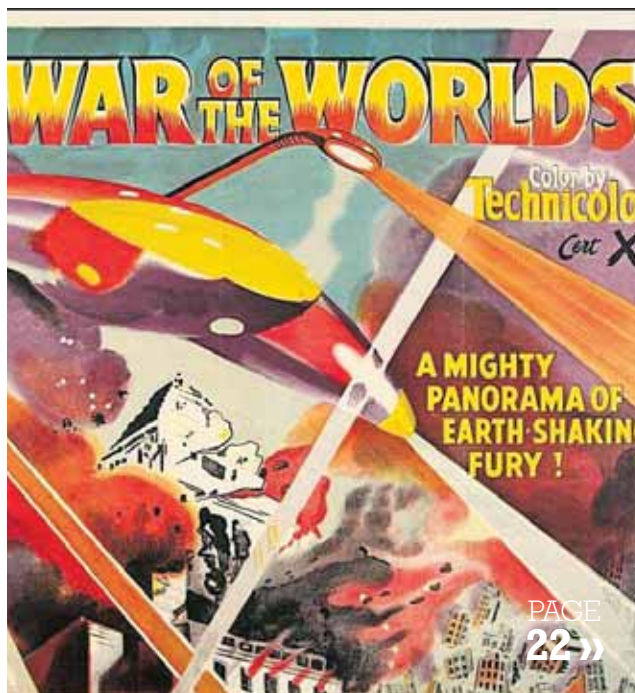
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## Snow could return this week as icy weather bites

By Chris Britcher

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KENT was hit by the winter blast on Thursday and Friday as snow and ice caused chaos on the roads - with forecasters saying the temperatures will pick up this weekend before plunging again.

Snow started falling during the Thursday night rush hour following several hours of heavy rain, causing major delays for many travelling across the county.

One motorist said a journey from Bexley to his home near Folkestone took him six hours.

Snow caused havoc on the major motorways as it started to lay on the lanes. Then the temperatures plunged to sub-zero overnight, turning much of the surfaces into ice rinks and causing problems for drivers heading into work on Friday morning.

Gritting lorries were in action once the rain started to turn to snow, but with rain washing away the salt, they had been unable to treat many of the county's roads before the snow started to fall.

A Kent County Council spokesman explained: "Unfortunately we



**DISRUPTION:** Cars in Wrotham on Thursday night as the snow started to fall

couldn't grit on Thursday afternoon during heavy rain and heavy traffic made it difficult to treat when it snowed.

"All crews were fully prepared and were out by 5pm and stayed out throughout the night. While we would love to be able to treat all our roads, we have over 5,200 miles to maintain and it is just not possible."

Some areas then experienced further snow on Friday morning.

Certain parts of the county fared

better than others, however. There was little snow in Thanet, while the west of the county woke to a blanket of the white stuff.

In addition, there were, on Thursday, a number of flood warnings in place along the Kent coast - although these were lifted by Friday.

The wintry weather continued on Saturday, but forecasters say today (Sunday) temperatures should start to pick up as a warmer air front moves in. It is unlikely to

last for long, however.

A spokesman for the Met Office said: "A change to milder conditions is expected on Sunday and Monday, but it will remain generally cloudy with periods of rain. A return to brighter, much colder conditions are possible on Tuesday. It will feel very cold for many, especially in the east and south, with sleet or snow showers possible across eastern coastal parts."

## SMEs to benefit from £5m loan fund to boost jobs and productivity

SMALL and medium businesses (SMEs) across the county are set to benefit after Kent County Council announced a further £5m of loans to boost economic growth and job creation.

KCC's Regional Growth Fund (RGF) has already supported some 242 companies in the county with £55m of loans that have created more than 2,212 jobs, safeguarded a further 1,663 and has been matched by £87.3m of private sector investment.

Now the Kent and Medway Business Fund is offering a further £5m of interest-free loans between £50,000 and £500,000 to SMEs.

This additional round of funding comes through the start of repayment loans lent through earlier RGF schemes, including Expansion East Kent, TIGER and Escalate.

KCC leader Paul Carter said: "The Kent and Medway Business Fund is a fantastic opportunity for businesses to get investment and grow with confidence.

"The county is an attractive place

for business and I'm delighted KCC can continue to help and support local businesses grow stronger and more prosperous."

A recent independent audit report praised KCC for demonstrating strong and improving relative performance in creating and safeguarding local jobs and for being 'unique' in its decision to award grant money as interest free, recyclable loans.

The loans can be used to develop new or expand existing products, services, or processes in businesses that would otherwise struggle to find funding from banks.

This latest scheme is designed to encourage enterprise, growth and jobs in the private sector and support areas and communities across the county.

Businesses applying for funding must show that these will lead to new jobs, deliver business growth and improve productivity.

Pre-applications can be submitted until January 19 via the KCC website.

## Engineering work to disrupt rail services this weekend

ENGINEERING work on our rail routes will cause some disruption this weekend.

Work is taking place between Sittingbourne and Heme Bay and Dover, with bus replacement services running instead.

In addition, work will be taking place between Swanley and the Rochester Bridge junction, closing all lines.

It means the service between Victoria and Canterbury East will not run and a replacement bus service will operate between Swanley and Strood. Sole Street will be served by a mini bus to and from Strood.

Southeastern advises passengers to check their journey before setting out and to allow extra time if services are disrupted.

## Ambassador at launch of Pocahontas 2017 events

US AMBASSADOR Matthew Barzun paid a special visit to Gravesend on Wednesday for the start of a series of very special events to mark the 400th anniversary of Pocahontas; the Native American who travelled from the US to live with her husband John Rolfe amid London society, only to die as she travelled down the Thames. She was buried at

Gravesend's St George's Church. She was just 21.

Now Pocahontas 2017 will celebrate her pioneering life.

The ambassador, in his final official speech before stepping down, said: "We have heard how Pocahontas' bridge building inspires people. Heading home, I am so full of hope and inspired by Pocahontas and her example."



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## Huge surge in crowds for Turner homecoming

CHIEFS of Margate's Turner Contemporary say more than 100,000 people visited its most recent exhibition – the highest recorded since the gallery first opened more than five years ago.

Crowds flocked for JMW Turner: Adventures in Colour for a chance to see 149 artworks by the famous artist, who once lodged on the site the gallery now sits.

The figures mark an increase of more than 31.5 per cent compared with autumn 2015 and smashed the 2.25 million visitor mark for the venue.

In addition to the Turner exhibition was John Akomfrah's Vertigo Sea – a three-screen video installation offering a 'meditation' on our relationship with the oceans. A new exhibition stars January 21.

## Public must be involved in any move to arm more cops – vows police chief

By Tom Pyman

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A SENIOR police chief says there are no plans to routinely arm officers around the county and insists a public debate would have to be held before such a move was made.

It comes after the Metropolitan Police Federation launched a survey among members asking if they wanted to carry guns and tasers in a bid to combat the threat of terrorism.

Last year Kent Police promised to recruit an extra 24 firearms officers and increased its presence around key locations such as Bluewater, the Port of Dover and Canterbury city centre.

And police and crime commissioner Matthew Scott announced earlier this month he was planning to raise the police precept on council tax bills by an average of £5 to maintain a frontline presence.

However, Ian Pointon, chair of the Kent Police Federation, which represents rank and file officers, told us he had no plans to follow in the Met's footsteps.



**ARMED:** Kent police debate

"We are not going to survey our officers at the moment about whether they want to be routinely armed but I can understand why they are asking in light of the new types of terror threats Europe is experienc-

ing," he said. "The way we deal with terrorism is not just about arming officers – contrary to what some may believe we have very safe borders and we have a far more joined-up approach than on the continent.

"We foil plots and intercept threats but that doesn't mean we should be complacent.

"If we ever got to a position where we were going to routinely arm officers that would have to involve a massive public engagement because we would be changing the way the police operates. I don't think we could just say 'we're going to do it' unless we reach a state of emergency."

It follows plans reported at the end of last year to provide forces with a new taser, which is currently being assessed by home secretary Amber Rudd.

A police spokesperson said: "Kent Police follows national policy with regards to the use of taser. We carefully consider the risks posed to officers and provide a proportionate number of taser trained officers to protect themselves and the public."



**SOLD:** One of the rare cups sold

## £46,000 for pair of rhino horn cups

TWO rare Chinese cups, crafted from rhino horn and spotted by the eagle-eye of a Kent auctioneer, have sold for £46,000 in auction.

They were from a collection of a family in Westerham, near Sevenoaks who had called on a local auction house to value a number of items they wanted to sell.

And although damaged, the valuer, Alan White from Ibbett Moseley in Sevenoaks, spotted their potential and advised they be entered into a specialist auction.

The two libation cups dated to the Qing Dynasty which stretched from 1644 to 1912 and received international interest when they went on the market – eventually selling for £46,000.

Mr White said: "We think the cups were probably purchased by a wealthy Chinese buyer. I was especially surprised as they were damaged which I thought would affect the value. The family thinks the cups were bought by a relative who did lots of travelling and bought them back from China as a souvenir.

"They are some of the highest value objects I've spotted in 35 years in the business. I feel relieved I spotted the cups otherwise they might have been thrown out or sold in a car boot sale."

## MP's Gurkha fears over barracks closure

MAIDSTONE MP Helen Grant ramped up her campaign to prevent the closure of Invicta Park Barracks with a special meeting at Westminster this week.

She met with a number of MPs from other constituencies also facing proposed closures as part of the government's Better Defence Estate strategy. It proposes the closure of a number of MoD sites.

The discussion centred on the MPs' fears about the impact the proposed base closures will have on their communities and also on the ability of the Army to recruit and retain the best personnel.

The Conservative MP said: "This decision is not fair on those who give so much to our country and deserve to be treated with a great deal more compassion and understanding.

"This rings particularly true for our Gurkhas to whom Maidstone has become their long term home and for whom the closure of the base would cause the greatest wrench."

## Bodies found at cliffs confirmed as twins

THE identities of the two bodies found at the foot of cliffs in Dover on New Year's Day have been confirmed as 59-year-old twins Muriel and Bernard Burgess.

The brother and sister were both from the village of Elton in Chester and found at the foot of Langdon Cliffs.

As an inquest into both deaths was opened then adjourned until March, police are still appealing for help to trace the last movements of the twins. They are keen to hear from guest houses, B&Bs, hotels, pubs and taxi drivers who may have been in contact with them over the Christmas period.

The twins were wearing dark-coloured wet weather clothing and may have been seen at the top of the cliffs in the period between Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

A man whose body was also discovered at the bottom of the cliffs on January 1 was formally identified as a 45-year-old Scott Enion, from Manchester.

The deaths are not being treated as suspicious and police are not linking the death of Scott Enion with that of the Burgess twins.

## Traffic analysis sees drop in Dover TAP

CHIEF at the Port of Dover say a controversial traffic management scheme leading up to the port is being implemented less, as a result of a major examination of its traffic flows.

And they say they are reaping the benefits of a two-year partnership with traffic specialists from the University of Kent's Business School to map pinch points.

It says the combination of the new buffer zone within the port complex – which is capable of holding four kilometres of traffic – and improved forecasting has resulted in a drop in the Dover TAP traffic scheme. It was used 13 fewer times in April and May 2016, compared with 2015.

The port, the busiest ferry terminal in Europe, has been working with traffic specialists to analyse data and build up a comprehensive picture of vehicle movements.

Port chief executive Tim Waggott said: "We are doing more than ever to keep Dover town moving while 17 per cent of the UK's international trade passes through the port."



# Not a public convenience as council forced into more cuts

By Luke May

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GRAVESEHAM is set to hike up parking charges and call time on a number of public toilets in the latest wave of enforced cuts to the local council.

A cabinet meeting this week proposed a host of measures in a bid to slash £1.43 million off its budgets as central government funding continues to be wound down.

To save £260,000, the Conservative-controlled council plans to increase parking fees by 30p for each tariff band, with resident and visitor parking permit prices also set to rise.

Up to five public toilets could also close, including ones on Clive Road, Parrock Street and Perry Street in Gravesend.

Deputy leader at Gravesham Borough Council David Turner explained: "With the announcements made by the government in December the council's need for savings has only grown further and means that difficult decisions have had to be made in order to continue to deliver frontline services for our residents."

Last month the council announced plans to close a tourism advice centre in St George's Square to save £66,000.

A council spokesperson defended the cuts saying: "These changes following a thorough review of how the parking provision



**CENTRE:** Gravesend will see parking charges hikes and public toilets reduced

and public convenience provision compares with other districts.

"Gravesham will remain one of the cheapest places in Kent to park, with toilet provision retained within strategic positions in the town, such as the market, The Woodville and the council's recreational grounds."

Elsewhere the council is looking to share its environmental health service costs with another local authority, and do the same with its revenues and benefits service.

Money spent on CCTV will also be cut, by

"embracing technological developments and introducing alternative operating models", according to the council.

These changes, along with restructuring licence fees, and cutting down on paper, could save up to £364,000.

The cuts could continue, as the final round of Gravesham's budget review will be looked at in the spring.

These latest plans are now to go before the overview and scrutineer committee, which will meet on Thursday, January 19.

## Port's £115m revival works get started

CONSTRUCTION is under way on a £115 million project to revive Dover's Western Docks.

The first construction stage includes the design and build of two new berths including quay walls and land reclamation, a new marina pier and dredging work. Following key enabling works, this major phase of the construction programme is set to begin within the next few weeks and is scheduled to be completed at the end of 2018.

## Garage boss dies after brain tumour battle

FORMER owner of the Cherry Tree Garage in Dover and a life-long member of the Methodist Church, Keith Tutthill has died. He was 71.

He passed away at his home in Danes Court earlier this month, a year after being diagnosed with an incurable brain tumour. He had sold the business in March 2016 when he became ill.

## Flash burns on boat

PARAMEDICS took a man in his 50s to hospital on Thursday suffering flash burns and hypothermia following a boat fire off St Mary's Island.

Crews were called to the River Medway near Samphire Way where they found the man had been rescued from the river by Army personnel based nearby, who had heard a small explosion and seen smoke.

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# Manston campaigners stage summit to prove its viability

CAMPAIGNERS working to save Manston Airport have called on supporters to unite ahead of a crunch meeting next month where the site's future will be discussed.

Thanet District Council is launching a public consultation on its draft local plan, in which the site is to be turned over for mixed use, rather than aviation.

The land is owned by the Stone Hill Park project, which aims to build 2,500 homes and leisure facilities through a planning application submitted last year.

A report by consultants Avia Solutions concluded that airport operations at Manston were "very unlikely to be financially viable" and while its validity has been slammed in some quarters, Thanet council leader Chris Wells has



repeatedly stood by it.

Described as a "technical meeting", organised by Thanet Liberal Democrats, the summit will bring together groups fighting to save the airport at Margate's

Winter Gardens from 10am until 2pm on Saturday, February 4. A spokesperson for the group said: "It will amount to a clear statement that Manston can be a sustainable, viable aviation services hub."

# Nuclear strike threat alert raised after talks splinter

THE threat of strike action at Dungeness edged closer this week after talks failed to resolve a row over pensions, leading to thousands of nuclear workers at sites across the UK being balloted over future strike action.

Members of trade unions including the GMB, mainly involved in decommissioning work, will vote in the coming weeks on whether to launch a campaign of industrial action in protest at plans by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) to make savings of £660 million.

Strikes could be held at the end of February if there is support from workers. Workers affected include those at sites such as Sellafield, Anglesey, Ayrshire, Dounreay and Dungeness.

The unions said the govern-

ment's expectation is that the final salary pension schemes in place across the NDA estate will be reformed by April 2018.

Justin Bowden, of the GMB, said: "We remain committed to resolving these issues amicably and is available for meaningful talks should the government want to pull back from this shocking episode of broken promises to workers in the nuclear industry."

The NDA spokesman said: "Government policy is that all public sector final salary pension schemes should be reformed by 2018, and four million public sector workers have already moved to new pension arrangements. Specific decisions on how to change the NDA's estate pension schemes have yet to be taken."

## Your chance to be on TV

A BBC TV series is offering people the chance to have a 'money makeover' that could save them thousands of pounds.

Right on the Money is returning for a third series and wants people from Kent to take part. Email [rightonthemoney@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rightonthemoney@bbc.co.uk) or call 07711 387316.

## Jail for coke and gun

A DRUG dealer who hid cocaine and a firearm at his home in Dartford has been jailed for more than nine years.

Lee Nevard was arrested in 2015, after large quantities of Class A drugs and a loaded handgun were recovered from a property in Sandringham Drive.

## Cut free from M20 crash

EMERGENCY teams had to cut free a woman from the wreckage of her car following a smash on the M20 motorway on Friday morning.

The smash took place near junction 11 for Hythe at around 9.30am. The woman was taken to hospital for treatment.

## Crook's double danger

A CROOK who burgled two homes in one night has been jailed for three years and four months.

Christopher Anderson, 32, from London, broke into two properties in Sandringham Road, Gillingham, last month. He was caught when using stolen cash cards.



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# Circuit vows to keep on racing

Chiefs at Lydden Hill racetrack insist it still has a bright future despite losing the rights to host the World Rallycross Championship which regularly pulls in 15,000 fans, but blames development delays

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

**B**OSSES at the Lydden Hill race circuit say an inability to deliver new facilities contributed to its loss of an annual rallycross event last week – but insist the circuit near Dover will not close.

Management and events firm IMG, which owns the rights to the competition, shocked the sport when it announced the UK round of the World Rallycross (WRX) Championship would switch location to Silverstone in Northamptonshire in 2018, away from the track where many consider the sport to have been born.

Race chiefs argue Lydden Hill has helped put the event on the map and grow it into a spectacle that attracted a record 15,000 spectators last year.

Circuit owner and former race champion Pat Doran said: "I don't think that we can ignore part of the initial contract discussions with IMG included the delivery of a development plan at Lydden Hill.

"In 2015 the circuit applied to Dover District Council to build a new



**POPULAR:** Lydden Hill, near Dover, has become a big draw for race fans.

entrance, grandstands and hospitality centre which fell in line with the rising demands of the growing event and customer expectations.

"However the application has dragged on and although I have never based the new development on keeping the world championship contract, I feel sure our inability to deliver the new facilities in a timely manner may have slightly influenced the promoter's decision to move the WRX.

"Having said that we do recognise

the event has developed and grown faster year on year than the circuit plans by about two years.

"So in essence, it could be considered that we are a victim of our own success."

The track in Wootton celebrates 50 years of rallycross this summer, when the event rolls into town for the final time on May 27 and 28.

However, Mr Doran insists the loss of the event does not consign Lydden Hill to a doomed future.

"The circuit, although sad to lose

## BRANDS UNLIKELY TO MAKE F1 BID

BRANDS Hatch chiefs have remained tight-lipped over speculation linking the circuit with a return to hosting motor-sports' premier event – the British Formula One Grand Prix.

F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone claimed two other UK circuits had contacted him after Silverstone suggested it may not renew its deal to host the race.

However, despite Brands hosting the race a dozen times – the last of which being in 1986 – it is thought the huge expense of staging the race, and the improvements required to the circuit, as well as traffic and local resident considerations, would prevent the circuit in West Kingsdown pursuing the contract.

the world event, is looking forward with excitement and optimism that the planning application for the new facilities will come to fruition," he said.

"Rallycross is still a big focus for Lydden. We enjoy a fantastic working relationship with the British Automobile Racing Club (BARC) [which organises the British Rallycross Championship] who have worked very hard to bring the sport forward and we will continue to work with them helping to grow the British Rallycross championship as it goes from strength to strength.

"Other events the Lydden team are currently putting together will in-

clude truck, motorbike, classic car shows, classic touring cars and cycling events to name a few of the areas under the team's focus in the new events calendar.

"We also look forward to working with event partners such as the BHP show who bring a fantastic ever popular event to the circuit each year.

"I feel confident the circuit will thrive and we look forward to being able to offer fabulous new facilities and an exciting events calendar to our customers in the near future and, who knows, we may yet see the WRX World Rallycross event back at Lydden one day, as it will always be the home of rallycross."

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**CHANGE?** The rail franchise for south east services is to be re-let next year

# London taking 'Hunger Games' approach to county rail services

Charlie Elphicke gives Chris Grayling his backing as KCC prepares response to south east franchise consultation

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

MP CHARLIE Elphicke claims London is "a Hunger Games-style capital seeking to subjugate" the county as he backed the government's decision not to allow Transport for London to take over suburban rail services in Kent.

Transport secretary Chris Grayling came under fire in December for rejecting mayor of London Sadiq Khan's proposals for TfL to take control of services currently operated by Southeastern.

Mr Grayling was accused of putting politics ahead of passengers after a leaked letter showed he opposed the devolution of suburban rail services in the London area to keep the network "out of the clutches" of a Labour mayor.

Defending his position at Transport Questions in the House of Commons on Thursday, Mr Grayling told MPs: "There's been no politicisation of this discussion."

"This decision was taken after the mayor's business plan was analysed across government, after discussions with neighbouring authorities, after discussions with people who know the route and the truth is the mayor's proposals offered no extra capacity for passengers and a whole lot of uncoded, unfunded promises."

"It also involved a very substantial top-down reorganisation."

"The approach we have chosen is the same one we have taken in northern [routes] and in the midlands

which is to create a partnership to develop a franchise that will work for all passengers in Kent and south east London to deliver the capacity we need."

Dover and Deal MP Mr Elphicke threw his weight behind his Conservative colleague, insisting the capital city was trying to exert too much power over Kent.

He said: "I support the transport secretary on that and say my constituents in Kent are deeply concerned that London for too long has acted as a selfish city, seeking to benefit itself at the expense of the people of Kent and the other home counties."

"It is not right for London to act like a Hunger Games-style capital seeking to subjugate the districts."

"We need fair rail services for Kent, Essex and the other home counties and I urge the secretary to carry on and uphold his decision."

Mr Grayling said in response: "I can assure [Mr Elphicke] I have every intention of doing so."

"The reality is this is a partnership arrangement that brings together London, Kent County Council and my department to do the right thing for passengers."

"It is interesting that the mayor could offer no proposals to expand capacity on these routes."

"I intend to bring forward proposals that do offer expanding capacity for passengers on these routes."

A spokesperson for Mr Khan said: "The polls show commuters overwhelmingly support the devolution of



**RANT:** Dover MP Charlie Elphicke

suburban rail services to TfL.

"The case is backed by councils, MPs and assembly members from all parties, and was even agreed to by the government last year."

"TfL has a fully-funded business case that sets out the substantial benefits passengers will receive from rail devolution, putting an end to the terrible service currently provided by the private rail companies and DfT."

The discussion in Westminster came on the same day as KCC's environment and transport cabinet committee endorsed a number of key issues to be included in its official response to next month's public consultation on the new south east franchise carried out by the Department for Transport.

It was announced at the end of last year that Southeastern would have its franchise extended by six months from summer 2018 to December.

It is understood the extension was granted to ease pressure at a time

when key changes are set to be rolled out across the rail network.

Kent will be one of the first areas in the country to have its train services and infrastructure run by the same organisation as Mr Grayling revealed plans for the publicly-owned Network Rail is set to share its responsibility for running the tracks with private train operating companies.

Under the proposals, the new 'joint management teams' will come into operation when the south eastern franchise is re-let next year.

Councillors and transport chiefs gathered at County Hall on Thursday to outline the key specifications the council wishes to be included in the new franchise.

After the launch of the consultation in February, KCC will send its official response to the DfT in April following a number of committee meetings before final approval by cabinet in March.

An invitation to tender notice will then be published for potential franchisees in September before it is awarded to the winner in August 2018.

Among the principal requirements for the rail franchise suggested by KCC are the provision of sufficient capacity and additional rolling stock on both the high-speed and mainline services, reduced journey times, improved stations, improved punctuality and response to disruption and improved connectivity to destinations within and beyond the county.

The council also requests a commitment to smart ticketing, options relating to first-class accommodation, a commitment to its Community Rail Partnership and a roll out of unified communications to passengers, after Green councillor Martin Whybrow told the meeting "pre-re-

corded explanations when things go wrong baffle passengers".

Key locations where a significant increase in demand for rail services have been identified, most notably in Ebbsfleet, due to the garden city and proposed Paramount Park development.

Likewise, the planned Otterpool garden town could see a spike in demand at Folkestone while council chiefs anticipate continual growth in demand at key stations like Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Sevenoaks.

A need for growth in high-speed rail provision was also identified at Canterbury West, Dover Priory, Folkestone Central, Folkestone West, Ashford International, Ebbsfleet International and Maidstone West.

Labour councillor Mike Eddy told the meeting he'd like to see high speed infrastructure extended from Ashford to Dover and Deal, but the council's transport planner for rail, Stephen Gasche, replied that the 90-minute journey to London St Pancras was "probably as fast as it can be" but added that he did want to see "overall enhancement for east Kent".

His specific ideas to increase capacity included running two high-speed off-peak services from Dover to the capital per hour, with only one every 60 minutes currently running.

Mr Gasche also estimated there was a need for a total of 20 six-car high-speed trains worth some £150m to meet the predicted Ebbsfleet population boom, for the Ashford-Canterbury-Dover line and for a new high-speed connection from Ashford into Sussex.

In terms of peak services, Mr Gasche told councillors he wanted to see six-car trains extended to become twelve-car.



# Will traders' fears put the brakes on traffic-free day in our cathedral city?

With all the county's major town's feeling the strain of an increased amount of traffic on our roads, Canterbury is discussion plans to ban them from the streets for 24 hours

By Adele Couchman

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**A** PROPOSED car-free day could go ahead in Canterbury this summer after it enjoyed cross-party support at a council debate earlier this week.

The initiative – the first in Kent – will hope to ease the city's clogged up roads by getting motorists out of their cars and promoting alternative modes of transport.

It will see streets closed off to vehicle traffic in an experiment which has been trialled elsewhere in the world but is still seen as highly controversial due to the reliance on private transport.

Traders have blasted the proposals which they say will deter shoppers.

Canterbury is certainly no stranger to controversial traffic schemes. Four years ago, it trialled a scheme which closed off the historic Westgate Towers to traffic which resulted in a diversion that left many residents and commuters fuming.

Yet the city knows it has an issue it needs to do something about. Especially with plans for thousands of new homes to be built in the city over the coming years.

With so much of the historic city centre within the city walls already predominantly traffic free, all other transport is funnelled around the city which results in it becoming one of the county's blackspots at times; creating pollution and queues.



**PUSH:** Labour's Alan Baldock

The city council's latest report on air quality found annual concentrations of pollutants exceeded its targets at different locations around the city.

In 2014, Green Party MEP for the south east, Keith Taylor, kick-started a campaign on air quality in Canterbury, after highlighting thousands of the city's children were attending schools located near some of the most polluted areas.

The MEP welcomed the plans, saying: "The city's transport system creates congestion and pollution and meeting those challenges requires imagination. Air pollution in Canterbury causes almost 100 unnecessary deaths each year and the health of nearly 4,000 children who attend schools near busy roads is at serious risk.

"The situation needs to improve

and a car-free day is a good way to start thinking about how to achieve that."

Leader of the Labour group for Canterbury, Alan Baldock, is behind this latest traffic-free day proposal, and raised the prospect at a meeting of city councillors at the Canterbury area members' panel on Monday evening.

He explained: "Car free days are a way we can tackle this demon we have been looking at for years, and we have to do something desperately with much more house building to come.

"What we're trying to do is get the message across that you don't have to get in the car every day, and to remind people there are alternatives like public transport and walking."

Although the day was first earmarked for Friday, September 22, to coincide with World Car Day – an international event which is celebrated in cities around the world – proposed dates for the move have been shifted following concerns it would clash with thousands of students arriving in the city during freshers' fortnight.

Instead, Cllr Baldock will campaign for the day to take place on a weekend this summer – although a concrete date is yet to be set.

He told KoS: "We're probably not going to hold the date on September 22 as there are all sorts of issues we hadn't thought about before with the university arrivals and all the extra cars on the road.

"My ambition is for it to commence in the summer but we probably wouldn't be talking about closing off the main routes for drivers.

"Proposals we would be looking at would be making housing estates car free so children can play outside, and also extending pedestrian areas in the city."

Jan Pahl, of local community group the Canterbury Society, welcomed the news in light of the Mountfield Park development for 4,000 homes towards the south of the city.

It is the biggest housing development ever proposed in Canterbury, which will offer two primary schools, a potential new site for Kent and Canterbury Hospital alongside shops, office space and sports pitches.

Canterbury's housing chiefs also plan to build 15,000 homes in the dis-

North & West



**SKYLINE:** Pollution levels have long dogged the picturesque city

trict as set out in its Local Plan.

She explained: "Air quality and pollution in Canterbury is a huge concern considering there could be thousands of homes in a few years time.

"That means more and more people getting in their cars to drive across the city, with the stations and universities in the north.

"The car-free day is just a day, but what it will do is hopefully change people's ways of thinking."

She added: "I live in the middle of the city and work at the University of Kent and until recently I always travelled by car.

"The university made it harder to park. I was given a free bus pass and the bus service was made more efficient – all three are factors that encouraged me away from driving.

"Modal shift is about getting people to change the way they habitually travel, and encouraging them to use alternative modes of transport like, buses, trains and park and ride services.

"Now we need to get thousands more motorists doing the same thing."

But the plans haven't gone without opposition, with concerns that closing some of Canterbury's roads to motorists could have a damning impact on traders.

Debbie Barwick, of the Canterbury Independent Traders' Alliance, said as well as causing a potentially damning impact for businesses, the city's public transport system would be ill-equipped to support the day.

"It's a disastrous idea that would be awful for business. People would read it in the newspapers, and they would interpret it as you can't go into Canterbury," said Ms Barwick, who is also the owner of vintage clothes shop Revivals.

"When the idea was mentioned on the radio earlier this week, I had actually had a lady ask me if Canterbury was closed off to traffic.

"Plus, I don't think the councillors proposing this idea really know what they are doing.

"There's talk of expanding the pedestrian areas in the city, but we have cars and bikes going through there even when they're not supposed to be.

"But what it has highlighted is the poor bus service residents are blighted with in Canterbury. Elderly people are imprisoned in their homes as it is, and you couldn't possibly close the roads when public transport simply isn't good enough.

"The only good bus service in Canterbury is for the university students which go every ten minutes, but there is no good bus service for residents."

Conservative city councillor Oliver Fawcett added: "I support the project, but I think there needs to be more discussion on what the day will actually bring.

"At the moment there doesn't seem to be a long term plan or a clear set of objectives, and the question remains over how it will affect people getting to work, how it will affect businesses and what happens when emergency services need to get down residential roads.

"If the day goes ahead, there needs to more emphasis on making Canterbury still seem positive and accessible rather than turning people away which would affect traders."

Car free days have been hosted in 120 towns around Europe, which have shut notoriously busy routes for cars in Paris including around the Champs-Élysées.

Canterbury council has agreed to set up a working group to look into the idea of reduced car use within the city centre and the idea of a car-free day.

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**BUSY:** Canterbury's popularity means roads are always busy



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KL 1/16



# Head mental health plans have come 'too late'

There was a mixed response to Theresa May's announcement this week, with concerns failure to invest more will put an increasing strain on teachers and police. **Tom Pyman** finds out more

A HEADTEACHER who founded a mental health support network for pupils in Kent says plans outlined by Theresa May this week to transform the way help is provided across the country have come too late.

The prime minister announced a radical set of proposals in one of her first major domestic policy speeches since being handed the keys to Number 10 in July last year.

At the heart of the plans was a desire to roll out new support for schools, with every secondary school in the country to be offered mental health first aid training and new trials to look at how to strengthen the links between schools and local NHS mental health staff.

Mental health training for teachers and staff will be given to around 1,200 schools this year, with the remaining two-thirds of the country's secondary schools offered this training in the following two years.

The training will be run by Mental Health First Aid UK, in conjunction with the government, and has been welcomed by mental health chiefs across Kent. But some believe the delay in implementing such plans has put extra pressure on schools.

Wrotham School head Matthew Wright has recently begun to develop a headteachers' network across the county's schools, to help raise awareness and allow member schools to share knowledge, information and best practice.

He told KoS: "Schools find themselves in a situation where they have to take action because the health service is not providing the support and treatment that young people need and deserve.

"By default, it has been left to schools to do it and an increasing number have had to find money from their own budgets to employ counsellors to help provide that support.

"It was interesting to hear this announcement by Theresa May but it's too late."

Mr Wright has worked with charity, Time to Change, to set up his support network, and its Whitstable-based director Sue Baker, recently honoured with an OBE for her services to mental health, wants to see it expand over the coming years.

"It's really nice that a school in my part of the world is leading the way," she said.

"I'd like to see more schools in Kent work together as part of a head teacher's network and I'd like to think Theresa May's comments will help get that moving.

"What's really positive is this was the topic of the prime minister's first speech about any health issue.

"We have got schools that are crying out for help with this – teachers feel out of their depth

and unable to provide that immediate support."

But Christine Dickinson, of the National Union of Teachers, warned yet more responsibility could put further strain on staff.

She told KoS: "I support further training on mental health issues but my only concern is teachers are being expected to do more and more.

"We have to make sure there is the place to refer on because teachers should not be acting as nurses or counsellors."

Faversham and Mid Kent MP Helen Whately, who was last year elected chair of a parliamentary group for mental health, threw her weight behind the proposals, however.

"Speaking to people around the constituency, people feel schools aren't equipped to support mental health needs because teachers didn't know how to help," she said.

"There are shortcomings in child and adolescent mental health services, some of which is due to NHS capacity to meet growing demand, but also in ways and places to support young people, and schools and colleges are the most important example of that.

"Training teachers and giving them some tools and guidance on how to provide support is a real boost.

"I think supporting mental health and helping people cope with pressures of life has to be part of the role of anyone who spends significant amounts of time with young people."

Mrs May revealed there will also be a major thematic review of children and adolescent mental health services across the country, led by the Care Quality Commission, to identify what is working and what is not and a new green paper on children and young people's mental health to set out plans to transform services in schools, universities and for families.

The prime minister also reinforced NHS England's commitment to ensuring no child is sent 'out of area' for treatment by 2021 – a problem that has dogged mental health provision in Kent for some years.

While the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT) does not provide services for children, it saw the second highest number of patients sent further than 50km from the county for care of all mental health trusts in the country in the summer of 2015.

Since then, however, figures have dropped dramatically to a point where there were zero patients sent 'out of area' in December 2016.

"We know in Kent we have a shortage of secondary care mental health beds and send too many children out of area and that is usually a very bad thing when the child needs family support," Mrs Whately said. "2021 is several years away so that should be feasible."





**ADVICE:** Teachers unions are anxious that teachers will be expected to become counsellors to children

Bosses at KMPT told us this week: "We have no plans to increase our commissioned bed capacity at this stage.

"We are continuing to look at how patients are admitted and discharged by working with partner organisations to avoid unnecessary admissions.

"This includes working with Kent Police on Section 136 detentions and street triage as an alternative to admissions.

"Additionally, we have our Single Point of Access contact centre, which supports people in a crisis through advice or referral."

The trust insists it is working hard within the community to provide more help and more nurses and is looking at why people are referred and not retained in beds.

Assisting the police is something KMPT has worked particularly hard on improving after police and crime com-



missioner Matthew Scott told us last year he had to bid for more funding after some patients had to be transported as far as Yorkshire in order to be adequately placed and supported, such was the lack of capacity.

Mr Scott said this week: "As I have said on many occasions, Kent Police spends roughly one third of all of its time dealing with cases involving mental health.

"That is not fair on officers, who receive some training in these matters but are not health professionals.

"It is also not right for the vulnerable person as they need to be getting care from the right person.

"We have been successful in securing some money from the Department of Health to improve the provision of health-based places of safety in the county, and I have funded projects that will reduce demands on policing.

"There is some way to go in ensuring that physical and mental health are treated the same in terms of funding, and pressure will remain on health

commissioners, through mental health funding scorecards and Crisis Care Concordat groups, to ensure that parity can move from being an ambition to a reality.

"However, the prime minister's announcement is a welcome step in the right direction."

Mrs May said: "What I am announcing are the first steps in our plan to transform the way we deal with mental illness in this country at every stage of a person's life: not in our hospitals, but in our classrooms, at work and in our communities.

"This starts with ensuring that children and young people get the help and support they need and deserve – because we know that mental illness too often starts in childhood and that when left untreated, can blight lives, and become entrenched.

"This is a historic opportunity to right a wrong, and give people deserving of compassion and support the attention and treatment they deserve."

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# Garden shoots bloom in gloom

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

A SELECTION of stunning images goes on show at Sissinghurst this week, showcasing winning images from the International Garden Photographer of the Year competition.

The exhibition at Sissinghurst Castle Garden will run from Monday, January 16, to March 5.

The photographs reflect the appeal of the garden taken by professional and amateur photographers. Categories on show include the beauty of plants, wildlife in the garden and wildflower landscapes.

Kate Shaw, events and marketing manager at Sissinghurst Castle Garden, said: "We are really excited to be hosting the exhibition again this year, there's a great set of images to see and our garden team who have helped to bring a little of the outdoors inside. They've been busy drying flowers and growing hundreds of plants as well as designing handcrafted pots and structures to make it a truly unmissable exhibition."

Now in its 10th year, the competition attracts entries from around the world and of all ages.

Sissinghurst gardens are currently closed to the public for 'rest and conservation'.

■ The exhibition, housed in the east house, will be open daily from 11am-4pm, last admission is at 3.15pm. Winter admission prices apply, free for National Trust members.



**DISPLAY:**  
Just three of the images which will be on display; above, Woolly in a Teacup by Renae Smith, far left Magic Moments by Rosanna Castrini and Richard Bloom's Tekapo Lupins

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# MP calls for struggling port to be leisure hub

By Emily King

emily.king@archant.co.uk

**C**RAIG Mackinlay has this week called for a "radical alternative" for the Port of Ramsgate, unveiling his ambitious vision just days after it suffered yet another blow.

The port, which is owned by Thanet District Council, has struggled to find a viable future since passenger ferry services ceased more than four years ago.

And it started the year facing up to the loss of a short-term contract with transport and logistics company GEFCO Ltd.

It had been using the port for the import and storage of vehicles prior to distribution around the UK. But after agreeing the deal this time last year, it has now confirmed it will not be renewing it.

The decision has once again ignited the debate as to the future of the port, amid concerns it could join Manston as another of Thanet's unsuccessful major transport hubs.

The South Thanet Conservative MP is now calling for it to become a "more leisure focused" site, with tourism a key driver of revenues, in addition to light industry.

But that is likely to be opposed by the Ukip-run Thanet District Council which maintains it is desperate to

see the port work and says recent improvement works means it should prove an attractive investment for any future business wanting to operate from the site.

This flurry of activity all comes just days before the council begins its public consultation into its local plan – an outline strategy for all developments in the area over the coming years. That begins on January 20. And although there are no proposed changes in the port's future use, Mr Mackinlay says it should be on the agenda as a discussion point.

The port had sat unused since the collapse in 2013 of TransEuropa Ferries' service.

It went bust owing the council some £3.4m in unpaid fees and charges.

Since then it has played host to occasional shipments of controversial live animal exports. An attempt to ban the trade by the council saw it hauled before the High Court had hit with a massive £2.3m fine.

Little wonder then, that the port has become such a contentious subject – and why the council is determined the asset start delivering returns.

A spokesperson for the council explained: "Following a successful short-term operation with GEFCO, we have demonstrated our commitment to the port's success by investing in refurbishment work to the ferry berths and we will continue our work to encourage new business to look at the wealth of opportunities available here."

Hunter Stummer-Schmerzlin, cabinet member for regeneration and enterprise services, added: "This has been part of a renewed effort by the council to reinvigorate interest and ultimately attract a mixture of new business to the port to complement our existing operations."

"We want to make the Port of Ramsgate a success and one that attracts business which will in turn boost the economy of the district. Following the recent major refurbishment work to the ferry berths, we believe we are in the best possible position to attract new business in the future."

But Mr Mackinlay says he fears the expansion of the Port of Dover may scupper any hopes Ramsgate has of gaining new industrial operations.

He told KoS: "Once the £200 million expansion of Dover harbour is completed it is difficult to see Ramsgate port bringing in new business; if anything it will add to the supremacy of Dover as the primary cross-



**CHANGES:** Ramsgate port back in the days of the doomed TransEuropa Ferries days.

Channel port for the south east."

Instead Mr Mackinlay has proposed a leisure alternative, which he believes will support the regeneration of Ramsgate – and something he first hinted to KoS last year.

He stated: "I firmly believe we need to think of an alternative to Ramsgate port, one of which does not involve heavy polluting industries in the heart of our town."

"Personally I would like to see the port become more leisure based, with a focus on a range of light non-polluting industries and tourism. This will help regenerate our area, creating new jobs and business opportunities, whilst protecting our unique maritime heritage."

Efforts by Brett Aggregates to build an aggregate washing plant at Ramsgate port were ditched at the end of last year following pressure from local campaigners, concerned about the pollution aspect.

However, he has no firm plans for his vision, but is adamant a different approach is required.

Certainly the port's financial woes are a concern.

Recent financial figures reveal the port has lost £7.6m in five years – excluding the big payments it has had to endure through the High Court fine and TransEuropa fiasco.

However, Thanet council says the figures are not quite as gloomy.

A spokesman explained: "The direct cost of running the port for the past five years is approximately £2.6m. The council has to follow strict accounting rules when it

comes to how it presents its accounts.

"This means that the figure of £7.6m actually includes things like revaluation of assets costs and depreciation, which are accounted for on paper but money does not actually leave our account."

But with public money at stake, sensitivities are understandably high.

Adds Mr Mackinlay: "This deficit comes directly from local taxpayers. Despite the losses caused by this piecemeal industrial policy, TDC have thus far refused to consider that the port has any alternative future other than the one they have politically committed to, and that's why I have created an online survey asking the public to project their views."

Two surveys about the future of the port, and Thanet's other long running transport hub saga, Manston Airport, went live on Mr Mackinlay's website on Friday and the results will be taken to TDC ahead of the local plan consultation.

Manston Airport and the port are not dissimilar in current situations, and former Green councillor Ian Driver recently compared the two stating that "just like Manston Airport, Ramsgate port is finished".

Certainly the initial approach, politically, to both have occasionally run along similar lines. Now, however, they appear on different tracks.

Having been elected on a promise to re-open Manston as an airport, the Ukip-controlled council has found the reality a very different

prospect, and subsequently is proposing to change the status of the airfield to 'mixed use' development in its local plan. This will potentially give the go-ahead for its transformation in the proposed Stone Hill Park project – a blend of housing, leisure and commercial opportunities.

Mr Mackinlay, likes his Thanet North Tory counterpart Sir Roger Gale, has long backed the bid for Manston to fly again. And, over recent months, has been locked in a bitter tit-for-tat row with the council.

He said: "The draft local plan proposed by the council recommends the final death of Manston for aviation use. It seems that having another bland featureless housing estate is the council's desire."

"I maintain that Manston has a great future for aviation, which would provide a huge number of well paid jobs and opportunities for the area, but Ramsgate port in its current situation and with Dover as competition cannot."

"This consultation is our opportunity to tell the council loud and clear that we do not accept their monumental U-turn on the future of the airport."

Mr Mackinlay concluded: "This is an opportunity to have your voice heard on two of the most important decisions locally. I'd encourage everyone to fill in my surveys so that we can ensure the new local plan properly reflects the wishes of local people."

Kent County Council declined to comment on the future of the port.



**DEBATE:** MP Craig Mackinlay

# Change homeless rules or more will die, warns charity

As winter bites, there are calls for action to prevent more deaths on our streets

By Adele Couchman  
adele.couchman@archant.co.uk

**M**ORE people could die on the streets if efforts aren't stepped up to support the homeless this winter, claims a leading homeless charity and a growing chorus of local politicians.

With temperatures plummeting during the past week, some local authorities will be triggering severe weather emergency protocols to save the lives of the rough sleepers in the freezing weather.

The protocols, which come into force when temperatures are predicted to be zero degrees Celsius or below for three consecutive nights, allow for emergency shelters to be set up in the likes of church halls and other municipal buildings.

As well as supplying emergency accommodation to prevent deaths on the streets, local authorities have a legal duty to provide advice and assistance to those who are homeless or about to come so.

But following the tragic deaths of two homeless men in Chatham last month, Porchlight says the emergency cold weather protocols councils exercise to get people off the streets are "not fit for purpose".

"Waiting for three days of below freezing temperatures is completely arbitrary, it doesn't have to be below freezing to die of the cold," explains the Canterbury-based charity's chief executive Mike Barrett.

He says funding cuts have led its rough sleeper team to fall in size.

Originally, Kent County Council funded 28 of Porchlight's outreach workers. But that has been reduced now to just four.

With Porchlight funding a further five, that means just nine professionals covering one of the largest authorities in England.

"People who are out there, lying on a damp floor, are extremely vulnerable and we should be getting them off the streets much sooner.

"When it gets colder, people start sleeping in riskier places, like large bins, woodland and derelict buildings.



**CONCERNS:** Porchlight chief Mike Barrett

"We've had instances in the past where people have died after they've been crushed in bins, and we've had a number of near misses in Kent where people come to collect the rubbish and they don't realise someone is in there.

"The majority of people we know on the streets are suffering from mental health problems, and will turn to alcohol just to get them through the night.

"Deaths are unavoidable if people are sleeping in the freezing cold weather and they aren't physically up to it.

"If it comes down to money or saving a human life, we need to ask ourselves some serious questions."

Medway Council has hit the headlines recently after a petition signed by more than 1,600 people demanded it should do more to help those sleeping on the streets.

**DANGER:** It doesn't have to drop

The campaign was set up after a homeless man was found dead in Chatham town centre on December 29, five days after the death of rough sleeper Michael McCluskey in Chatham High Street.

Medway Labour have called for the council to change its policy to support the homeless throughout the



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below zero for rough sleepers to be vulnerable, explains charity and growing number of councillors around Kent

winter, and will be tabling a motion to change the rules of the severe weather emergency protocol trigger later this month.

Instead of three consecutive days of sub-zero temperatures forecast, Medway Labour Group are proposing reducing it to just two days.

"I'm concerned that Medway

Council have chosen to hide behind budget cuts rather than show compassion," Labour group leader Vince Maple told KoS.

"It's no lie that local government has been disproportionately hit by budget cuts. But when I hear people like Paul Carter [KCC leader] and Alan Jarrett [Medway Council leader]

moaning about how they've been hit, they really should be flagging their frustrations to their own government.

"Three days is far too long for someone to be out on the streets in sub zero temperatures. But there are wider issues as well, involving decent quality housing.

"There is a limited amount of support in Medway, and charities are having to step in and do an awful lot. We shouldn't have Shelter and Porchlight in the 21st century."

A Medway Council spokesperson said its protocol operated within national guidance.

Howard Doe, Medway Council's portfolio holder for housing, defended the unitary authority's stance. He said: "Council officers undertake considerable outreach work in partnership with charities.

"In regards specifically to the severe weather emergency protocol, the three day requirement is in line with NHS guidelines.

"Medway Council is also supporting the winter shelter which is now open. Medway Council officers refer and assist people to access this accommodation, which is staffed with volunteers and using community buildings such as churches and halls."

Dartford's Labour councillors are also critical of the three-day trigger, saying Dartford Borough Council must do more to protect the homeless in freezing conditions.

Leader of the Dartford Labour group Jonathon Hawkes said: "At the moment the policy is too inflexible, which is also a view that has been shared by many homeless charities for a long time.

"It doesn't take into account 'feel like' temperatures, instances of heavy snow and torrential rain which makes life really for rough sleepers.

"Some local authorities do take that into account, and what we do see is councils who have a more flexible approach to the protocol are more progressive in supporting

homeless people in general.

"In Basingstoke, for example, there were emergency protocols all the way throughout December.

"But here in Dartford, the council provides the bare minimum. There is no emergency accommodation when the cold weather protocols are triggered and the closest accommodation is in Gillingham.

"They simply aren't at the forefront of offering emergency support."

Conservative Pat Coleman, Dartford council's portfolio holder for housing, explained the authority's position and that it was open to adjusting it in the light of recent tragedies.

He said: "We would rather not have anybody sleeping on our streets, but we have to make use of what resources we have.

"If the problem starts to expand, then we will need to have a re-jig of our policies.

"I don't know if we have reached that level yet, but the last thing we want is what happened in Chatham, so in future we might have to check if the emergency protocol needs to be changed."

The number of rough sleepers in Kent almost doubled last year, and the number of young people – aged 25 and under – who are homeless has tripled since 2014.

Porchlight's rough sleeper team monitor the number of people found on the streets. The charity is aware of 379 people who slept on the streets between April and September 2016, compared with 200 people in the same period in 2015.

The charity looked after 176 rough sleepers between April and December last year, although another 65 have approached them this month alone.

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# Could rare movie poster hit £50,000 under the hammer?

A movie buff's collection of film art will go under the hammer this week with his widow hoping cash will help fund her plans to move closer to her grandchildren

By Adele Couchman  
adele.couchman@archant.co.uk

**T**He widow of a film fanatic from Folkestone could make up to £27,000 from her husband's rare collection of old movie posters at an auction next week.

Brian O'Connor, who passed away last May aged 71, started his collection when he served in the Army in the 1950s and was helping out at the armed forces cinemas.

Now, his wife has decided to put nearly the entire collection of the iconic 20th-century film posters up for sale – with an extremely rare 1953 War of the Worlds movie poster among the lots to go under the hammer.

Experts say it could, on its own, bring in tens of thousands.

And that would allow his widow, Liz O'Connor, to fulfil her dream of raising enough money to allow her to move closer to her grandchildren in West Sussex, which is how she intends to spend the proceeds.

Explains Mrs O'Connor: "Brian has been a film nut all his life.

"It all began when he was asked to change one of the cinema posters when he came across a cupboard that was full of them.

"The posters were supposed to be put back up when the film came out again but new ones would come round and the old ones would be gotten rid of.

"Brian asked if it was possible if he could take them home, and the collection went on from there.

"At the time, he didn't have a clue what they would go for."

When he returned back to Folkestone from the Army, Mr O'Connor would continue his collection until the 1960s – where he would accumulate 236 posters of films from 1939 to the mid sixties.

The auction, which takes place on Tuesday in the west Midlands, includes a total of 300 posters – 230 of which are from Mr O'Connor's prized collection.

However, Mrs O'Connor admitted she is keeping six back from the sale to keep in the family.



**COLLECTOR:** Brian O'Connor

They include a 1959 poster for Sleeping Beauty for her granddaughter and her personal favourite for the 1960 movie The Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond.

"Before he would fold them up in

**“It's not impossible for a poster to make really big money. Some have gone for as much as £100,000”**

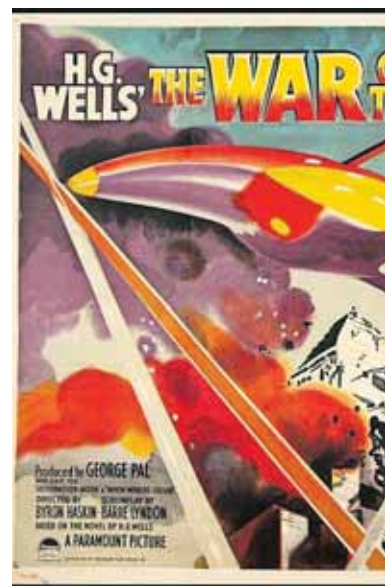
**Chris Aston,**  
Auctioneer

the loft," she explains, "but then I suggested to him he should lay them flat and cover them so they wouldn't get dust on them," she said.

"It is very sad they are going, but I can't put them all up.

"People will be able to see them, and it means they aren't hidden away."

Chris Aston, of Dudley-based Aston's Auctioneers which is auctioning off the posters, said: "The star of the lot is the War of the Worlds poster which was printed 63 years ago and has only ever been up for auction once.



"Nobody has seen the poster since it was sold at an auction in 1997 – so it really could go for anything. The poster is estimated at £5,000, but it could go as high as £20,000 or even £50,000.

"A few years ago, we had a rare Lego set that had never been auctioned before. I was about to put the hammer down for £900, but it went for £2,300.

"It's not impossible for a poster to make really big money – some of the Hammer Horror posters like Dracula have gone for £100,000."

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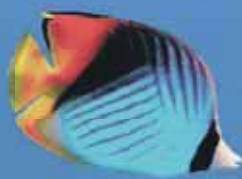


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**COLOURFUL:** Just some of the many film posters in the auction this week



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Pick 'n' Fix from SES Business Water offers businesses the chance to choose from a boiler service, repairs to dripping taps, repairs to leaking sinks, stopcock repairs, or repairs to dripping ball valves. Each service normally costs £50 under the offer, and could help businesses avoid much more costly repairs this winter. You can find out more at [www.sesbusinesswater.co.uk/pick-n-fix](http://www.sesbusinesswater.co.uk/pick-n-fix)

Pick 'n' Fix is just one way in which SES Business Water are demonstrating their commitment to helping local businesses get watertight for winter. Their recently launched Winter Hub is packed full of useful information, easily digestible tips and expert advice – as well as handy infographics which are free to download and share with your team – because making plans to get your business watertight is easiest when everyone is on-board!

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**OPINIONATED:** She's known for her political stand-up shows but says she includes material for all to enjoy

## Josie Long returns to Kent for eighth stand-up tour

She talks to KoS about Brexit and how she survived Bear Grylls' The Island...

**B**Y now Josie Long thought she'd have children and be in love, and have a country that didn't vote with the far right parties to march us all off a cliff.

But instead, she's taken her political anguish and (not quite as she'd hoped) life and turned it into material for her eighth stand-up tour, which is coming to Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre and Margate's Theatre Royal.

In an interview with KoS, Ms Long, who grew up in Orpington, doesn't shy away from her political beliefs as she explains why her new tour reverts back to politics.

"I wanted to write a show about optimism and activists, about sharing experiences from people I've met but Brexit shocked me and overshadowed my life, and so this

show became personal," she says.

"It's now become about how I feel like I'm not in the majority, and how I'm getting my head around how so much has changed politically, so quickly. I want to show the audience that we need to remain hopeful, kind, and humane, and that it is possible for us to stay that way."

The title of Ms Long's stand-up, *Something Better*, is itself a double meaning.

"It encompasses the show's meaning – wanting something better for you, for the world," informs Ms Long.

"But then it's also a humorous name. At comedy festivals, when you're speaking to your friends about what everyone is going to see that day and they're talking about seeing some boring, old comedian, you can just say 'I'm going to see

*Something Better*'".

However, she also plans on being one of those 'old' comedians.

"I'll always do stand-up, it's kind of like my life companion, and it's my main creative outlet. It helps me deal with my life. I love that you can be an old lady comedian and stay respected, it's so cool," she comments.

In her spare time, Ms Long likes to swim, but not just any kind of swimming – she enjoys swimming in fresh, cold water, in rivers, and lakes.

"It's a massive stress releaver for me. When you first get in the water, it's so cold you think you're going to die," she laughs.

"But then it's so different to just walking beside the river, you can really take in the natural world around you.

"It really helped my time on the

Island with Bear Grylls, and it was so lovely to swim in a tropical sea. What helped more than anything, and what I truly learnt to appreciate during that time was the little role of fat around my middle. The fatter people had it so much easier than the thin, or muscular people."

Ms Long is also the co-founder of the Arts Emergency Service, which is dedicated to getting underprivileged teenagers places on university drama courses.

She says: "It's incredible, it's gone from eight students and one mentor, to 150 students and three paid staff. We want to take it international in the long run but it might take 15 years to get that far."

*Something Better* is coming to the Marlowe Theatre on February 1 and the Theatre Royal on March 2.

For tickets, visit [marlowetheatre.com](http://marlowetheatre.com) or [theatreroyalmargate.com](http://theatreroyalmargate.com)

» Email us details of your event to: [editorial@kosmedia.co.uk](mailto:editorial@kosmedia.co.uk)  
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ARCHANT }



# Punk rock event Undercover Festival moves to Dreamland

By Emily King

emily.king@archant.co.uk

**P**UNK rock festival, Undercover Fest, is moving to the seafront setting of Dreamland Margate in September.

Guests can enjoy two packed days of alternative music including punk, ska, dub, reggae, post-punk and alternative, with already announced acts such as Eddie and the Hot Rods, Doctor and the Medics, The Urban Voodoo Machine, Imperial Leisure, and Surgery Without Research.

The festival, now at its third different home, grew out of a small tent tucked in the back corner of the sadly departed GuilFest in Surrey and has now become a firm fixture in many people's diaries.

The festival is one that prides itself on taking an independent and grassroots approach to things, with two days of alternative action from bands you'd be unlikely to see at other festival.

Festival organiser Mick Moriarty says: "Being a small independent grassroots festival is tough. But we've got through to our fifth year and we're going



**GRASSROOTS:** Festival goers are unlikely to hear acts from Undercover at other festivals

strong because what we have created really has struck a chord with people who like their music raw and full of the passion and energy that only acts like ours generate."

The full line-up will be released shortly and includes a host of big bands and local artists over two stages.

Festival goers won't have to worry about the weather either because the event actually does what

is says on the tin – it's undercover and indoors.

Dreamland regularly hosts music acts, with previous artists including Foals, Andy C, and DJ Jarvis Cocks.

Though the sale of the pleasure park looks set to go ahead this year, it's calendar looks full.

Events taking place include GEEK Festival from February 17 to 19, Hipville weekend from April

28 to 30, and Screamlend returning from October 13 to 28.

Dreamland members will receive 24 hours priority booking to get their hands on an Undercover Festival ticket. The tickets will then be available for general sale from January 6, at 9am.

Ticket prices are £39 in advance, £45 in advance, and £75 in advance, depending on the type of ticket purchased.

## Chubby Brown in Margate

COMEDIAN Roy "Chubby" Brown, is set to entertain audiences when he stops at Margate's Winter Gardens on February 10.

For tickets, visit [margatewintergardens.com](http://margatewintergardens.com)



## Hunter returns with tour

REGINALD D HUNTER returns with his new comedy show. He is coming to Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall on April 30, Dartford's Orchard Theatre on May 5, Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall on May 11, and Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre on June 11.

For tickets, visit respective box offices.

## The Bootleg Beatles

SINCE 1980 The Bootleg Beatles have performed gigs across the globe, and now they're coming to Chatham's Central Theatre on March 26.

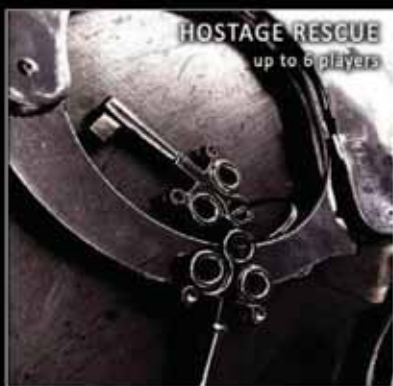
For tickets, visit [tickets.medway.gov.uk](http://tickets.medway.gov.uk)



## Walliams' hippo on moon

A STAGE adaptation of David Walliams' The First Hippo on the Moon will be coming to Dartford's Orchard Theatre from January 29 to February 1 and Gravesend's Woodville Theatre on April 21.

For tickets, visit [orchardtheatre.co.uk](http://orchardtheatre.co.uk), or [woodville.seatlive.com](http://woodville.seatlive.com)



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## A Persian romance opera

ONE of the most romantic operas ever, *La Bohème*, is coming to Dartford's Orchard Theatre on February 19. Tickets for this classic tale of love and loss can be purchased from [orchardtheatre.co.uk](http://orchardtheatre.co.uk)



## Award-winning musical

BILL KENWRIGHT brings his production of *Evita* to Dartford's Orchard Theatre from May 30 to June 3. With 20 major awards to its credit, and an Oscar-winning film version starring Madonna and Antonio Banderas, *Evita* is iconic. For tickets, visit [orchardtheatre.co.uk](http://orchardtheatre.co.uk)

## Comedy club's TV star

FORMER *Casualty* and *Hollyoaks* star James Redmond is the headline act at the first comedy club night of 2017 at the Old Brewery Store in Faversham on February 2. For tickets, call 01795 542285



## Art exhibition for Mencap

ARTIST Sebastian Ward Turner, will be exhibiting a collection of oil paintings at the Wilberforce Scout Centre on January 28 and 29, and donating sales to Bromley Mencap. The Scout Centre is on Downe Road, Keston. The exhibition is free to enter and begins at 10am.

# Bowie Experience pay homage to music icon

By Emily King  
[emily.king@archant.co.uk](mailto:emily.king@archant.co.uk)

**D**AVID Bowie's parents met at the cinema in Tunbridge Wells, and now, tribute act the Bowie Experience, will take to a stage in the town to recreate the music legend's greatest hits. The superstar musician died on January 10, 2016, and little over a year later, the tribute act's cast, plan to pay homage to the singer, who grew up in Bromley and Beckenham when they were still parts of Kent.

A documentary which aired on BBC two on January 7, what would have been the singer's 70th birthday, revealed that he only found out the cancer, which claimed his life, was terminal three months beforehand.

The Bowie Experience cast pay attention to the sound and feel of the icon's music, all performed with passion, energy and verve of the thin duke himself.

Complete with authentic costumes and iconic stage set projections, the show has been invited to perform at festivals and



theatres all over the world.

"We pride ourselves on doing the music justice," says Laurence Knight, who plays Bowie in the show.

"We aim to faithfully recreate the sound and vision that made Bowie's songs so timeless."

Mr Knight is a vocalist, actor and multi-instrumentalist who has performed all over globe during the past eighteen years of touring, with performances at the official David Bowie Is exhibition at The V&A London, The Royal

Albert Hall and alongside The Cure, Boney M, Roy Wood and the Boomtown Rats.

The show is coming to the Assembly Hall Theatre on January 27.

Tickets can be booked online on [www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk](http://www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk) or in person at The Gateway (open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm or alternatively at the Assembly Hall Theatre counter on Saturdays from 12pm to 5pm and from 90 minutes before a show's advertised start time).



**THEATRICAL:** Bowie was a showman on stage



**MARRIED:** Bowie and his wife Iman

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# Seven-time Golden Globes winner La La Land

**Damon Smith** reviews the critically acclaimed film and dubs 'impeccably crafted'...

**T**HE FRENZIED expectation surrounding writer-director Damien Chazelle's musical love story was deafening before La La Land won a record seven Golden Globe awards earlier this week.

His impeccably crafted follow-up to Whiplash is now firmly installed as the frontrunner for glory at next month's Oscars, and already has one trembling hand on the coveted golden statuettes for Best Picture and Best Director.

The feverish hype is fully justified.

La La Land is a visually sumptuous, unabashedly swooning valentine to the golden age of Hollywood musicals, artfully constructed on a foundation of distinctly modern sensibilities.

Yes, characters burst into catchy songs composed by Justin Hurwitz, with snappy lyrics by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul, to express their churning emotions, while their bodies tap, pirouette, twist and jive to Mandy Moore's expressive choreography.

But there is so much more to Chazelle's story of boy meets girl than doe-eyed glances and pat sentiment, including a heart-wrenching second act that affirms the need for everyone to chase their dreams, but also acknowledges the acrid pill we must swallow when reality bites, down to the bone.

Aspiring actress Mia (Emma Stone) works as a barista in between auditions, which repeatedly end in crushing rejection.



**STARS:** Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone

On a traffic-jammed Los Angeles freeway, she crosses paths with talented pianist Sebastian (Ryan Gosling), who reveres jazz in its purest form, but is forced to play saccharine standards by restaurant owner Bill (JK Simmons).

"I hate jazz," Mia tells Sebastian after they meet at a party in the Hollywood hills, where they share dreams for the future beneath the twinkling stars of the Californian night sky.

Sebastian is convinced he can spearhead a new appreciation for music until an old classmate, Keith (John Legend), questions his devotion to masters of a bygone era.

"You're holding onto the past," laments Keith, "but jazz is about the future."

While Mia prepares to stage her semi-autobiographical one-woman show So Long, Boulder City, Sebastian agrees to play keyboard in Keith's soulless, chart-friendly band The Messengers.

Frustrations between the couple come to a head in a fractious and fro about artistic integrity.

"Since when do you care so much about being liked?" snarls Mia.

"You're an actress!" Sebastian angrily reminds her, introducing pot to black kettle.

La La Land is a perfect marriage of directorial brio, tour-de-force performance and jaw-dropping production design, and Gosling and Stone are individually luminous and electrifying as a double-act.

## Hollyoaks star in Ghost

**T**HEATRE star Carolyn Maitland will join Bill Kenwright's production of the timeless story of love, despair and hope, Ghost – The Musical, in the part of Molly alongside Andy Moss as Sam, when it debuts at Dartford's Orchard Theatre on January 17.

Andy Moss is best known for the role of Rhys Ashworth in Channel 4's Hollyoaks, one he played for eight years.

For tickets, visit [orchardtheatre.co.uk](http://orchardtheatre.co.uk)

## Paul Young visits Deal

**L**OS PACAMINOS, fronted by one of the UK's best loved vocalists Paul Young and featuring Drew Barfield, Mark Pinder, Steve Greetham, Jamie Moses and Melvin Duffy, is coming to Deal.

The band play the very best in Tex Mex Border music from The Texas Tornados and even Roy Orbison, and their show is coming to The Astor Theatre on Saturday, February 4.

## Kate Bush's tribute act

**C**LOUDBUSTING, the Kate Bush tribute act, is coming to Deal's Astor Theatre on February 11.

In 2014, Ms Bush returned after a 35-year break, becoming the only woman to have eight albums simultaneously in the UK charts.

Mandy Watson, who plays Ms Bush, said: "I still pinch myself that I get to sing songs from such a diverse repertoire."

For tickets, visit [theastor.org](http://theastor.org)

## Storytelling circus

**C**IRQUE ENCHANTMENT, the storytelling circus show, is heading to Maidstone's Hazlitt Theatre on January 28.

The story focuses on a girl with a big imagination and as she reads her enchanted storybook the circus in her mind comes to life on stage. What follows is an adventure lead by the vocals of show star, Miss Enchantra.

For ticket, visit [parkwoodtheatres.co.uk/Hazlitt-Theatre](http://parkwoodtheatres.co.uk/Hazlitt-Theatre)



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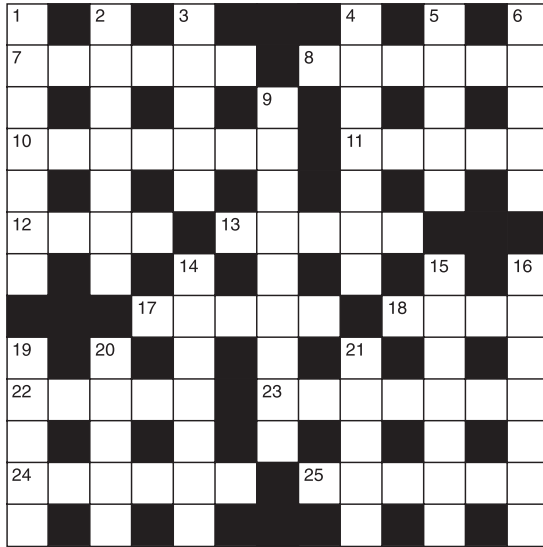
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# PUZZLES

## DOUBLE CROSSWORD



### Quick

#### Across

7. Maintain (6)
8. Peril (6)
10. Particular (7)
11. Fat (5)
12. Oaf (4)
13. Motionless (5)
17. Poisonous (5)
18. Row (4)
22. Elude (5)

23. Vain (7)
24. Matchless (6)
25. Verge (6)

#### Down

1. External (7)
2. Coax (7)
3. Obvious (5)
4. Stonework (7)
5. Concur (5)

6. Command (5)
9. Abundant (9)
14. Woebegone (7)
15. Branch off (7)
16. Existing (7)
19. Scent (5)
20. Concede (5)
21. Rot (5)

### Cryptic

#### Across

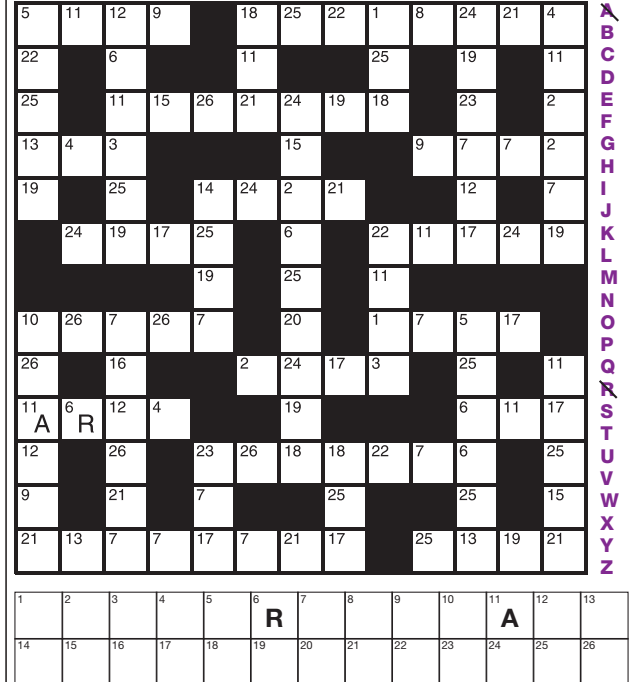
7. Abuse about shocking evil ... (6)
8. ... look inside a French station - you'll find plenty! (6)
10. In manufacture it's wrong to make a slip (7)
11. Eats some of the food in estaminets (5)
12. Beware this sort of man - he's prehistoric! (4)
13. Concerning a boxing match (5)
17. Namely palindromic electronic device (5)
18. Give out portions of flesh, we hear (4)
22. Because of being in an outstanding position (5)
23. Mouthpiece? (7)
24. Wish to place one among the tangled reeds (6)
25. Islam's translated a service book (6)

#### Down

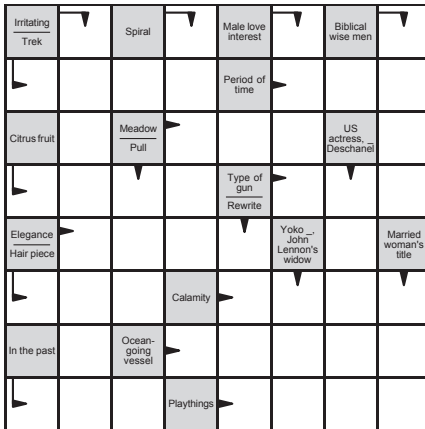
1. Distorted expression when I'm in prayer (7)
2. I have to save up first - that's dodgy! (7)
3. Magistrate about fifty, cold and uncharitable (5)
4. Put on the canvas and displayed (4,3)
5. See 20 Down.
6. Some users encircle the waterway in France (5)
9. Players' manuals (9)
14. Pull up near the convict - he may be caught loitering! (7)
15. Ask about a search (7)
16. Shows several changes (7)
19. They provide timber for a set of bowls (5)
- 20 and 5 Dn. Start of golf tournament, boxing match or cup competition! (5,5)
21. Smith's equipment takes a hammering (5)

## CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter. For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.



## Arrowword

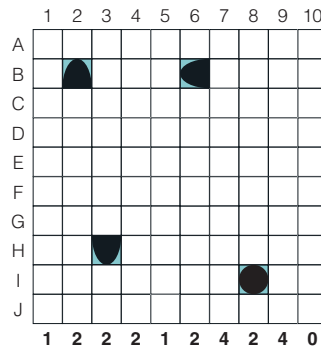


Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

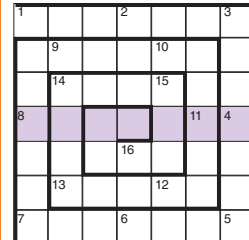
## Battleships

Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET  
1 x Battleship  
2 x Cruiser  
3 x Destroyer  
4 x Submarine



## Word Spiral



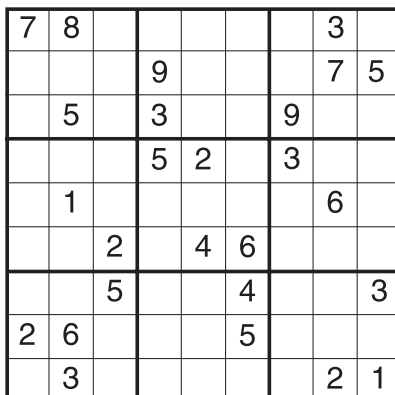
Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Metallic element
2. Leg part
3. Pointed tooth
4. Lass
5. Lengthy
6. Impudence
7. Suggestive look
8. Harvest
9. Stopper
10. Acquire
11. Inert gas
12. Body part
13. Retain
14. Bucket
15. Surgical fabric
16. Amphibian

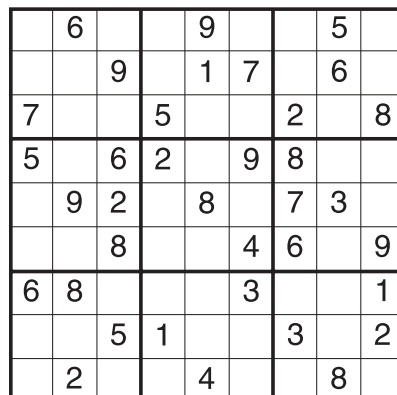
Keyword clue: An English town

## SUDOKU

### Hard

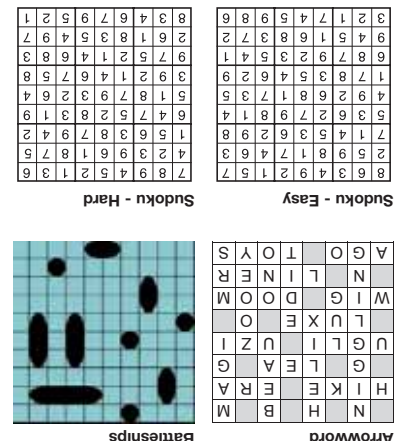


### Easy



## Solutions

Key: 1. Distorted expression when I'm in prayer (7)  
2. I have to save up first - that's dodgy! (7)  
3. Magistrate about fifty, cold and uncharitable (5)  
4. Put on the canvas and displayed (4,3)  
5. See 20 Down.  
6. Some users encircle the waterway in France (5)  
9. Players' manuals (9)  
14. Pull up near the convict - he may be caught loitering! (7)  
15. Ask about a search (7)  
16. Shows several changes (7)  
19. They provide timber for a set of bowls (5)  
20 and 5 Dn. Start of golf tournament, boxing match or cup competition! (5,5)  
21. Smith's equipment takes a hammering (5)





# A romance for everybody

**ANDREA POWELL** says the paradise island of Mauritius is not just for honeymooners...

**A** laid back vibe, welcoming locals, beautiful beaches... No, it is not the Caribbean but rather the paradise island of Mauritius. Synonymous with honeymooners, yes, but we all like a little romance from time to time – don't we?

Mauritius somehow manages to be both comfortable and exotic, luxurious and pleasantly 'off the beaten track'. And there is plenty for those not just content with lying on a beach. There are no less than 11 golf courses on this tiny island.

For those seeking culture, there's a replica of the legendary Dodo at Port Louis' Natural History Museum. Explore the Central Market, a bustling hub of culture, colour and bargains. Visit the impressive and historic manor houses in Moka. Or take in

Chamarel's rainbow of coloured sands, the 'Seven Coloured Earth'. Black River.

If nature is more your thing, the Gorges National Park is great for picnics, hiking, scenic drives, wonderful waterfalls and wildlife, while La Vanille Reserve des Mascareigne is home to thousands of crocodiles and giant tortoises.

It is also well worth taking excursions inland to learn about the island's interesting history and culture, and to see how local Mauritians live outside the fancy beach resorts.

Learning the local Sega dance is a delight for visitors, and it is particularly special to seek out night spots frequented by locals rather than just sticking to resort entertainment.

For thrill seekers, there is even the longest zip-line in the world. What a ride!



## When to go

Mauritius is a year round destination. Summer runs from November to April, with temperatures reaching as high as 93°F (34°C) on the coast. During winter the temperature drops a few degrees; however, there is still plenty of sun.

## How to get there

Air Mauritius and British Airways have direct flights from London Heathrow. All airlines fly into Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport (SSR). Transfers will then take from 10 to 90 minute.

## Where to stay

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## Section 40 will hit free press

IF section 40 of the Crimes and Courts Act goes ahead, and this nasty, pernicious, vindictive act passes into law, allowing newspapers to be unconditionally sued without the claimant having to pay even one penny in costs – whether the allegations are proved true or not – local newspapers will be hit extremely hard. It will basically kill off investigative reporting.

May the names of the MPs who voted for section 40 be published, allowing the electorate to take appropriate action at the next general election.

**S Reeves,**  
 Herne Bay

## NHS now hit by Thanet ill health

WE, in Thanet, have been putting up for the last six years, with the crisis now happening in the NHS.

We have not had our 24-hour A&E hospital, the QEOM (Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother) in full use as such ever since November, 2011.

That was when we were informed, through a press release from the East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust, that some staff and services would be taken from the QEOM and placed elsewhere. This, in itself, is contrary to the NHS constitution where it states that deprived areas must have more consideration for services.

Through these six years there has never been any public consultation (a legal obligation) about this cut in services, although we were promised so many times there would be public consultation, none have happened.

Now the NHS is in crisis similar to that in Thanet.

What bothers me is that subsequent governments, since joining the Common Market, were never cognisant of the fact that by allowing thousands upon thousands of people to become resident in Great Britain, more doctors, nurses, hospital beds, teachers and houses etc would be needed to accommodate them.

The 'man in the street' has been telling them that for years now. That is why I, and they, voted for Brexit.

**Betty Renz,**  
 Margate

## Garden city plans ignore the issues

WITH regard article that hundreds of affordable houses are set to be built at Ebbsfleet Garden City with the development of 600 houses well

## LETTER OF THE WEEK



## Worm has turned on the PC liberal elite

IT IS not surprising that, in responding to my comments regarding grammar schools [KoS, letters, 01.01], one of your correspondents chooses to link such comments with my doubts about the theory of climate change, as those who hold what are regarded as progressive views on the former also uncritically swallow the latter.

The other letter, from a member of the educational establishment whose attitudes I criticise, accuses me of using anecdotal evidence rather than facts.

But I can assure her that the following are facts; vast numbers of pupils at grammar schools in the 1950s and early 1960s were from working class backgrounds; the education they received enabled them to enjoy better careers than they would otherwise have had; attendance was by merit, not based on financial factors.

May I point out that if we were to choose our Olympic athletes on the same supposed egalitarian

principles espoused by the professional educationalists then we would probably not win any medals in future games.

The politically correct left liberal lobbies have had their way in this country for decades.

Thanks to them we have seen, inter alia, the police force becoming more like the 'thought police', the education system undermined in pursuit of equality of outcome, not opportunity, and the future energy resources of this country put at risk in the name of unproven climate theories.

Worst of all they have sought to hand our democracy over to the unelected bureaucrats of Brussels.

They still refuse to accept the will of the people but on June 23, 2016, the worm turned and their day is done.

IFI might be so 'elitist' as to use a Latin phrase: For the UK now alia iacta est.

**Colin Bullen**  
 Tonbridge

under way and on target to be built this year [KoS, last week], this is very commendable and great for the first time buyers and others that this will benefit.

But, as usual, the developers (EDC and others) as well as local councils fail to grasp the problems that come with such developments.

Generally 600 homes means approximately 1,000 plus more cars on the road and no more provision for the 1,200 plus people who will naturally want to access our one and only hospital.

When is someone going to learn? Our rapidly rising population is

saturation the area because of the continuing building explosion. Our one hospital cannot cope and certainly neither can our road structure.

Every day, our roads and heavy traffic reflect the loads that are being put on us.

This is, of course, without the endless argument of immigrants. Only one accident on the A2, M25 or the A282 and the whole town is completely boxed up for hours and we see this regularly every week – sometimes twice a week. It can't go on

**Stan Saunders,**  
 Dartford

## Just what is the traffic answer?

THERE are those who complain, some would say whinge, about the inconvenience caused by repairing and upgrading roads, railways and other infrastructure.

There are those who complain about the outdated and the broken and the over-crowded and road-jammed nature of this same infrastructure. Are they the same people?

Do they have a plan that would bring about one without the other? Would they care to share it?

**Edward Baker,**  
 Tunbridge Wells

## Tragedy focuses mind over speed

A FEW years ago, the sister of one of my good friends was tragically killed by a speeding driver.

The devastating impact this has had on him and his immediate family is impossible to put adequately into words.

Therefore, I shall never be able to agree with Terry Hudson and Christopher Hudson-Gool who believe that fast driving is acceptable and that speeding should be encouraged and condoned [KoS, letters, last week].

Mercifully, most of us never have to be exposed to the horrific carnage left behind in the wake of a fatal road traffic accident.

The closest we come to observing the bloody aftermath of a road death are the mangled remains of countless birds and animals littering our highways.

This is unpleasant enough for most people, so please spare a thought for our amazing, brave, emergency services who have to forensically examine and clear the scene after human lives have been senselessly lost on our roads every single day of the year.

**Clive Wilkins-Oppler,**  
 Petham

## Speed is always the issue, Terry

TERRY Hudson chooses to avoid one simple fact relating to all accidents, however they may be classified by the Department for Transport.

It is the speed of the vehicle at the time of the accident which must be considered alongside whatever it was that contributed to the accident.

The slower the speed, the lesser the damage and risk of serious injury or death. Commonsense that not a lot of people seem to possess these days. I fear.

**Colin Packman**  
 Tonbridge

## KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

**Kent on Sunday will:**

- 1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
- 2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.

- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to North & West

people living in the county.

9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.

10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

**We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.**  
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**Sunset over Sarre**  
by **Paul Breakell from Ash**

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\*All-New Scénic payment based on £7,606 deposit, 24 monthly payments of £249, optional final payment £8,963. Finance provided by Renault Finance, PO Box 149, Watford WD17 1FJ. Subject to status. Indemnities may be required. UK residents only (excluding the Channel Islands). Over 18s. Terms and conditions apply. Offers based on 6,000 miles per annum, excess mileage 8p per mile inc VAT. Finance available on selected new vehicles when ordered and registered by 31 March 2017. Car shown with optional metallic paint an extra £545.

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**RIO:** Fourth generation is an evolution not a revolution...



## Evolution not revolution with Rio

**PREVIEW:** After revolutionary changes in the previous models, Kia must now make more finely tuned gains and improvements to its supermini

**R**EGULAR readers will be used to me banging on about the big advances sister brands Kia and Hyundai made with nearly every new car model launched over the past decade or so. Such ambition enabled those Korean marques to catch up fast and challenge Western rivals. But reaching par means that improvement is now more likely from incremental rather than radical change – evolution rather than revolution.

The new Rio supermini – due next month – is a fine example: it looks much like its predecessor though slightly longer, wider and lower, but it's only when you look inside this fourth-generation version that you realise that the Kia advance continues.

The larger cabin is more stylish and ergonomically arranged this time, with the linear dashboard accentuating interior width.

A high-resolution touchscreen powers the car's audio, navigation and new connectivity systems. The interior is also available with upmarket black or grey faux leather upholstery.

On a practical note, the previously rakish rear has given way to a more upright back screen to aid boot space – it's a more grown up offering all round.

And we know the new Rio will be keenly



priced and backed by Kia's market-leading seven-year/100,000-mile warranty

The real test of continuing momentum though will be out on the road: Ford is about to replace the Fiesta after some nine years leading UK car sales, and still its driver dynamics and handling are amongst the best in the supermini sector.

By comparison, the previous Rio was simply adequate: it held the road well, and delivered a decent ride, but the steering lacked feel, and keen drivers struggled to warm to the car.

If Kia has managed to make this incremental change with the G4 Rio then that could be even more impressive than the model's revolutionary advance last time.



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**Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km). Vauxhall range: Urban: 12.7 (22.3) – 83.1 (3.4), Extra-urban: 23.3 (12.1) – 94.2 (3.0), Combined: 17.9 (15.8) – 91.1 (3.1). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 373 – 82g/km.\***

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# New Scénic horizons from Renault

MPV inventor has re-appraised its offspring and remoulded the Scénic as a stylish rival to the crossover/SUV horde, writes **Steve Loader...**

**P**EOPLE carriers or multi-purpose vehicles (MPVs) are dull – or are they?

Consumer interest has certainly cooled, and sales have been more badly hit than most car sectors by the rise of crossovers and SUVs (sports utility vehicles).

But Renault is better equipped than most to take a long hard look at MPVs and re-position them.

The French marque invented MPVs, launching the Espace (1985) and then the original Scénic (1996) sparking a race for new models and sales into the high volume midsize MPV segment.

It was a scramble that Renault lost ultimately, largely due to the later arrival of the cuddly/ugly, but highly successful, Citroën Xsara Picasso.

But in a 'success or bust' move, Renault has now remodelled the type to create a fourth generation Scénic (from £21,445); it's still a capacious one-box design, but bolder and sportier – an MPV you might buy for style as much as versatility.

Indeed, sitting on big 20-inch wheels – the standard size across the range – you might mistake the Scénic for a crossover.

It looks good in both five-seat and



seven-seat Grand Scénic (£23,375) formats, handles more tautly and leans less than before, though established Scénic buyers might lament how those big wheels now crash over road blemishes rather than smoothing them out.

The lineage is still clear though, once you examine the airy and

well-organised cabin, with plenty of head and legroom in the standard car.

Admittedly, the extra pair of perches in the Grand Scénic tested here are a challenge for adults to access and get comfortable in, though probably no worse than most rivals – these are occasional seats



intended for youngsters really.

Underfloor storage bins have been retained and there's a neat refinement to the versatility and arrangement of the rear seats on both five and seven-seat cars: all sections can be flopped fully flat individually or together with one touch from the front of the cabin or a slave unit

## Renault Scénic Dynamique S Nav dCi 130

|                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Price:          | from £28,445             |
| Driving appeal: | ★★★★                     |
| Image:          | ★★★★★                    |
| Space:          | ★★★★★                    |
| Value:          | ★★★★                     |
| Running costs:  | ★★★★                     |
| How green?:     | ★★★★                     |
| Best rival:     | Citroën Grand C4 Picasso |

mounted in the boot – handy when wrestling something into the back.

There are two turbocharged 1.2-litre petrol options – 115hp and 130hp – with manual 'boxes, and a mild hybrid diesel option arrives in the spring, but the best sellers are two diesel manuals: a 110PS 1.5-litre and 130PS 1.6-litre, though there is also a 130PS 1.5-litre diesel auto.

The 110 feels underpowered even in the smaller five-seater, especially for a vehicle designed to spend much of its life well laden, so the 130 of the Grand Scénic test car is the best bet, even if it is rather more vocal.

Overall though, this is an impressive return to form for the 'Créateur de MPVs' – if you'll pardon my bastardisation of a former Renault ad slogan.

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Fuel consumption in mpg (l/100km) for the models shown: Urban 38.7 (7.3) – 68.9 (4.1), Extra Urban 61.4 (4.6) – 85.6 (3.3), Combined 50.4 (5.6) – 78.5 (3.6), CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 130 – 94g/km. MPG figures are official EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. Models shown: Picanto 'SE' 1.25 4-speed auto, Rio 'SE' 1.1 CRDi 6-speed manual ISG and Venga '1 Air' 1.4 5-speed manual ISG. Nil advance payment is correct at the time of going to press and is subject to orders being accepted between 01.01.2017 and 31.03.2017. Motability customers only. 7 year / 100,000 mile manufacturer's warranty, for terms and exclusions visit [www.kia.co.uk](http://www.kia.co.uk). Motability is offered on selected vehicles across the Kia range, find out more at [www.kia.co.uk](http://www.kia.co.uk)

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## LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

### Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 NOTICE UNDER ARTICLE 13 OF APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

Proposed development at: Land at Oakapple Lane, Oakapple Lane/Hermitage Lane, Barming, Maidstone, Kent Maidstone

Take notice that an application is being made by: Bovis Homes

Applicant Name: Mr John Dale

For planning permission to: Erection of a new access road

Local Planning Authority to whom the application is being submitted: Maidstone Borough Council

Local Planning Authority Address: Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent

Any owner of the land or tenant who wishes to make representations about this application, should write to the council within 21 days of the date of this notice.

Signatory: Mr Chris Hawkins

Date: 13-01-2017

Statement of owners' rights: The grant of planning permission does not affect owners' rights to retain or dispose of their property, unless there is some provision to the contrary in an agreement or lease.

Statement of agricultural tenants' rights: The grant of planning permission for non-agricultural development may affect agricultural tenants' security of tenure.

'Owner' means a person having a freehold interest or a leasehold interest the unexpired term of which is not less than seven years. 'Tenant' means a tenant of an agricultural holding any part of which is comprised in the land.

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If you would like to find out more about our school, plus application form and JD please visit [www.westheathschool.com](http://www.westheathschool.com) or contact [lynn.mcgrath@westheathschool.com](mailto:lynn.mcgrath@westheathschool.com) if you have any questions.

Closing date for applications is 27th January 2017.

Working at West Heath School involves close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable groups including children, and as such is a "Regulated Activity".

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ARCHANT



# Top scorer set to stay at Priestfield

QPR approve an extension of Jay Emmanuel-Thomas' loan

## Football

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

GILLINGHAM head coach Ady Pennock says Jay Emmanuel-Thomas will stay at Priestfield until the end of the season.

The former Gills defender, who was named as Justin Edinburgh's replacement in the dugout last week told the media at his first pre-match press conference he was pleased to retain the services of the versatile attacker, currently on loan from QPR.

"I spoke to [Rangers manager] Ian Holloway this week and Jay will be with us for the rest of the season," said Pennock.

"QPR said they're not going to take him back; they're pleased with the experience he's getting here.

"He's a talented boy, a match winner. We've spoken to him, and the way we're looking to play should suit him, if he starts."

Emmanuel-Thomas began his career with the Gunners before going on to feature for the likes of Bristol City and Ipswich Town.

The 26-year-old has hit 10 goals in all competitions for Gillingham so far this season, making him the club's top scorer.

Meanwhile, Steve Waggott is stepping down as full-time chief executive in a move to get the ball rolling on the club's new stadium plans.

The decision was made in order to concentrate on pursuing a consultancy role relating to the stadium development project with chairman Paul Scally, as the Gills look to move to a base bigger than Priestfield.

Last year the club invited Thames



**STAYING:** Gillingham top scorer Jay Emmanuel-Thomas

Pictures: ADY KERRY

Gateway minister Mark Francois as well as local MP Rehman Chishti to inspect proposals.

In 2012, Mr Scally revealed plans for a stadium at Medway Village, at Mill Hill near their training ground at Beeching's Cross which would also include a hotel, fast food restaurants, supermarket, fitness centre, shops,

nursery, and a tennis academy, but a landowner refused to sell her plot to make way for the stadium, so proposals were redrawn.

Two years later, Gillingham submitted plans to build the biggest stadium in League One to Medway council but hundreds of residents signed a petition opposing the move.

## Bromley release promotion-winning captain

## Football

BROMLEY have released defender Rob Swaine after confirming he submitted a transfer request to leave Hayes Lane.

The 28-year-old joined the Ravens in 2013 and captained the side to an historic National League South title, which saw the club win promotion to the top flight of non-league football.

Speaking to the club's website, Swaine said: "I would like to thank everyone associated with Bromley Football Club.

"From the management and players past and present, the owners and chairman but most importantly the fans.

"They've been amazing from the time I joined and throughout the



**HOME:** Hayes Lane

many awful clearances and passes, it has been an incredible three and a half years and I leave Hayes Lane

with very fond memories.

"I will never forget captaining the team to the Conference South title, it'll stay with me forever."

Boss Neil Smith added: "Rob has been brilliant since he came to the club but we had a chat last week and he wanted to terminate his contract, we had a good long conversation but he was finding it hard and wasn't happy.

"I want players who want to be here and he didn't, so we have to move on and progress as a club together both on and off the field.

"It has all happened rather quickly, it wasn't necessarily a position we were looking at up until very recently.

"We have a couple of replacements in mind but we have to make sure it's right for the club."

## Sport Shorts

» Email [sports@kosmedia.co.uk](mailto:sports@kosmedia.co.uk) or call Tom Pyman on 01233653477

## Adams takes Windies director of cricket role

FORMER Kent head coach Jimmy Adams has been appointed as the West Indies' new director of cricket on a three-year contract.

The 49-year-old, who played 54 Tests and 127 one-day internationals for the Windies, left his position at Canterbury last October after five seasons in charge of the county.

Adams, who takes up his new position with immediate effect, said: "I am very excited to be directly involved in Caribbean cricket once again, and I look forward to working with all those committed to moving the game forward in the West Indies."

Outgoing director of cricket Richard Pybus, who was part of the selection panel, added: "I look forward to Jimmy bringing the breadth of his international experience and knowledge of cricket in the Caribbean to continue the work of rebuilding West Indies Cricket."

Former Kent batsman Matt Walker was last week named as Adams' replacement, with Allan Donald joining as his assistant.



**CHANGE:** Jimmy Adams



**READY:** Alex Bellingham (right) in action.

Photo: SAM WORDIE

## 'No more Mr Nice Guy' warns welterweight

WELTERWEIGHT title challenger Alex Bellingham says he is ready to shake off his Mr Nice Guy reputation and show a more "spiteful side" when he steps back into the ring next month.

The 22-year-old from Orpington goes head-to-head with Michael Darvill in a Queensbury Boxing League national title showdown at the Effingham Park Hotel in West

Sussex on February 4

Bellingham, a former Haringey boxing cup gold medallist, was last in league action back in September, drawing with Danny Stafford at Epsom Downs Racecourse.

"Over the last few months I've really been pushing myself in training and working on lots of new things, and in this fight people will see a different side to me."

## Ramsgate sack Ward brothers

RAMSGATE FC have confirmed they have sacked Jim and Danny Ward from their roles in the dugout after entering a relegation battle.

The Rams board have made the decision midway through what has been a tricky campaign in the Ryman South – the eighth tier in the pyramid – where they have not won a home league game since October.

A club statement read: "The board

had genuine concerns this season about a run of poor results from what is a talented squad

"The budget was increased at the start of the season in the hope of a good cup run and was reduced after our early exit as agreed.

"We had set realistic points targets to be met by November that were not achieved, culminating in a poor Christmas campaign."

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